

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

1821.

THE GREAT FAMILY PAPER FOR HALF A CENTURY.

1872.

Vol. LII. H. PETERSON & CO., No. 210 Walnut Street.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 1872.

TERMS: \$3.00 a Year in Advance.

No. 17.

UNAPPRECIATED.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

I was born with a poet's heart of fire
And an artist's eye for lovely things;
My soul was a sweet untutored lyre
That longed for the tones of sweet strings;
Wild, burning words, with a meaning high,
How up to my lips and called for aid,
And when sunset flushed the western sky,
With spirit pencil I caught each shade.

They knew not the source whence such feelings
Sprang,
They called me a dreaming, useless clod;
With scornful fingers they clipped my wings,
And buried my talent beneath the sod;
I could never rise while they held me there,
A woman's weakness needs helping hands;
And as time rolls on with its weight of care,
They draw more lightly their iron bands.

For the foamy wine that the famous quaff,
My cup with bitterest gall is life;
For the bread of praise, their helping staff,
I must eat the stone of a fettered life.
Alas! for all that I "might have been,"
Alas! for my glowing hopes laid low,
To them be portioned the deadly sin,
They held me back when I fain would go.

Friends they are called, and methought that friends
Where those who helped and hindered not,
The trust and comfort friendship lends
Are counted by its good deeds wrought;
They have pity to spare for widows' tears,
And help where the lone orphan sighs,
And pity me who have dwelt for years
Alone in the midst of kindred throngs.

SADIE BEATTY.

THE CHILTON ESTATE; OR, Close Play for a Fortune.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

BY RETT WINWOOD.

AUTHOR OF "A BLACK SHEEP IN THE FOLD,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRICKER FASHION.

At those Frank words, spoken so fearfully
by Roland Trevor, Mr. Chilton started. His
face changed perceptibly. With all his
powers of self-control, he could not help
showing some degree of agitation.

"My niece!" he echoed, sharply. "What
can you wish to say concerning her?"

Roland turned to him with a quiet dignity
of manner that was wonderfully becoming.

"I love her," was his simple answer.
"Indeed!" There was an angry vehemence
in that single word that Mr. Chilton could
not for his life, have helped giving to it.

"I love her," the young man resumed.
"You are her guardian. I am here to ask
your consent to make her my wife."

Mr. Chilton controlled his rising ire by a
powerful effort. He succeeded in turning a
bland, smiling face upon his companion.

"Oh," he cried, affecting a playfulness he
was far from feeling, "that's the way the
wind blows, eh? I begin to comprehend.
My niece did not give me an inkling of any-
thing of this sort, however."

He was silent a moment, clasping and
unclasping his thin hands with a nervous move-
ment.

"May I ask," he resumed, presently,
"if you have spoken of this to Claudia? Of
course, you have—of course she does know
why you are here?"

Roland bowed. "Miss Chilton has been
good enough to acknowledge I have won her
heart. She knows the object of this inter-
view, and fully approves of it."

"Indeed," Mr. Chilton was visibly disturbed.
He rose up in his chair and then fell back again.
His thin hands recommenced their nervous
movement.

"You have taken me by surprise," he con-
fessed. "I scarcely know what to say to
you. Of course you are in a position to keep
a wife?"

He looked eagerly at Roland Trevor, and
his face brightened. But only for a moment.

"I am contented," was the young man's
answer. "I will give you my lawyer's
address, and you can inquire as closely into
my affairs as you desire."

"Not now," impatiently turning his head.
"We can attend to all that by and by. How
long have you known my niece?"

him almost beyond control that there was
no legitimate excuse for separating the
lovers.

"It would not be politic for me to refuse
that consent," he said, forcing himself to
speak the words. "I do not wish to abuse
my powers as guardian. I lend my sanction
to this betrothal. But I do so on two condi-
tions."

Roland rose up eagerly.
"What are they?" he cried. "You know
I will do anything reasonable for Claudia's
sake."

"Calm yourself," smiled Mr. Chilton,
"and hear the first condition. It is this—
when you leave this house to-day you must
go with the intention of remaining sepa-
rated from my niece for the space of two
months."

The young man uttered a sudden ejacula-
tion.

"Two months! That would seem like
half a life-time."

"It is only sixty days,"
"Sixty eternities!"
Mr. Chilton shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you consent, or do you not?" he said,
blandly.

"I am compelled to consent. It would
be useless to protest against the condi-
tion."

"Ay, utterly useless."
"But of course I can write to Claudia as
often as I please?"

The ready villain shook his head.
"That is the second condition, to which
I was coming as rapidly as possible. Now you
understand my terms. You are not to see
my niece, or hold any communication what-
ever with her, until the two months have
passed."

Roland turned pale at these words. For
the first time he looked sharply and sus-
piciously into the face of his companion.
But he could read nothing there.

"I think you have made two very singu-
lar conditions," he said, in a low voice.
"They may seem such to you."

"I do not comprehend them in the
least."

"Let me explain," purred Mr. Chilton.
"There is nothing more likely than that two
young people, who imagine themselves in
love for the first time, should eventually
discover that they were mistaken. We
don't know our own minds at so early an
age. We can't know them until—"

"Do you doubt that I love Claudia, or
that Claudia loves me?" interrupted Roland,
hotly.

"I don't doubt the honesty of your pre-
sent impressions," was the bland reply.
"But I am deeply interested in the happi-
ness of my niece. She shall not wreck it
by a mistake of that sort, if I can prevent it.
Do you blame me?"

Claudia again before I go!" he said, after a
moment's silence.

"Yes," he rose with alacrity, and walked
toward the door. "I will send my niece to
you directly," he said, turning with his hand
on the knob. "Say to her what you please,
only impress upon her mind the necessity
of fulfilling my wishes to the let-
ter."

Then he went out. Claudia had already
gone up-stairs to change her travelling-dress,
but he sent up a message by his wife, and
she soon re-appeared, dressed in a rose-
colored silk that rendered her beauty more
striking and piquant than ever.

Mr. Chilton never knew precisely what
transpired in the library. But he paced the
drawing-room floor with a very black frown
upon his brow. His lips were white and tre-
mulous. He felt that a single star might
even yet turn the tide of his fortunes so
that utter ruin would result.

At last Roland Trevor came out, and was
driven away in the carriage which had
brought him to Chilton Villa.

Then, and not until then, did that bold,
hard man in the drawing-room begin to breathe
freely once more. He shook his clenched
fist at the rapidly-disappearing carriage,
while his contorted features were awful to
look upon.

"When you come to this house again,"
he muttered slowly, and with devilish malig-
nancy, "you will find your sweetheart in
another man's arms, or—"

He never finished the sentence. A slight
shudder shook his frame, and he dropped his
face into his hands and remained silent and
motionless for some time.

At last footsteps approached, and he was
aroused by a hand laid on his shoulder. It
was Claudia's.

"Roland is gone," she said, in a very low
voice, "and I know all you have said to
him."

Mr. Chilton started up. He looked at her
furtively, and then looked away again.

"You forgive me," he faltered. "You
believe I have been working for your good?"

"What else can I think?" she brought
her face down to his, of a sudden, and
looked him straight in the eye. He found it
very difficult to meet that searching gaze
without flinching.

"Tell me that you are truly my friend,
Uncle Eustace—that you intend to make
good my dear papa's plans so far as you
can," she cried, imploringly.

He gently kissed her cheek, though half-
frightened at the strangeness of her manner.

"What can it mean?" he thought. "But
girls are whimsical. Is it anything more in
this case, I wonder?"

"Then she said, 'I am not myself this morn-
ing.'"
"Do you doubt me, Claudia? Have I
ever given you the slightest cause to distrust
me?"

"Very well," he said, pleasantly. "Then
I will keep her away from you. I want you
to be happy here."

"Thank you," she looked up to him eager-
ly now. "There is one person I would like
to have with me, Uncle Eustace."

"Who is that?"
"The girl you introduced to me in this
room—Hetty Deane."

Mr. Chilton started. He changed color, a
momentary fear showing itself in his face.
He had almost forgotten Hetty's presence in
the house.

"Why should you care for her society?"
he asked, quickly recovering himself.

"Because she is near my own age, and
because I am sure I shall like her. Please,
Uncle Eustace, send her to me and let her
stay with me as much as possible."

"Will you be the happier for it, if I do?"
"Yes, yes, indeed, I will."

"Then she shall be your companion for
the present, if I can arrange it. She is a
poor sewing-girl, you must know, and will
be glad to help herself in a crumpled
petticoat."

"I happen to know that she is engaged at
this present moment. But she shall come
to you ere long. You have my word for it."

"Thank you, dear uncle."
She slipped lightly from the room, her
spirits nearly restored by this promise, and
Mr. Chilton was left to his own reflections.

Affairs had taken a curious turn indeed.
Would it be safe to bring these two girls to-
gether a second time? He doubted it.

And yet what excuse had he for backing
down from his pledged word to Claudia?

CHAPTER X.

MIGHT AGAINST RIGHT.

The day wore on, and some hours past
soon Hetty Deane was still locked in that
room on the ground floor into which she had
been thrust by Mr. Chilton.

She had flung herself in a crouching
posture against the wall, quite mute, but
palpitating with a sense of guilt and terror.

How very vile she had been to lend her
self to the plot against an innocent man!
Would God ever forgive her? Could she
ever forgive herself? Was it too late to ex-
pose the fraud she had helped to perpetrate
upon James Chilton?

She wrung her hands in an agony of re-
morse as such thoughts coursed through her
brain.

Sometimes she was tempted to scream for
help. But what friend could she expect to
find in that dreadful house?

She heard footsteps coming and going,
and frequently the low hum of voices. But
it was impossible to tell to whom they be-
longed.

Once she rose up and approached the
window, thinking to escape to the lawn. But
a rough-looking man stood leaning against
the wall outside, and he silently motioned
her to go back again.

She did so, in greater trepidation than
ever, on discovering this new evidence of
the vigilance of her enemies.

At last a key turned in the lock, and Im-
mortal came bowing and smiling into the
room.

Hetty started to her feet with an ejacula-
tion of surprise, for she imagined that the
wily little Frenchman had quitted the house
the night before.

He tripped lightly up to her, and threw
himself into a seat. "Sit down, my dear,"
he purred, gracefully pointing out a second
chair. "I am come to you as an ambas-
sador. I must have your perfect attention
during the next few minutes."

Hetty declined the chair, and returned,
haughtily.

"I have no wish to hear anything you
have come to say."

"No? Think again, my dear. Mr. Chilton
sent me."

"I do not care who sent you."
"But it is for your interest to hear this.
Don't look at poor little Lamont like that.
Don't speak to him in such a tone, and with
such an air. What has he done that you
should regard him as an enemy?"

"What have you done?" echoed Hetty,
growing agitated and hysterical. "You have
enticed me away from the humble little room
where I was happy, you villain! You have
compelled me to aid and abet you in a
scheme that fills me with horror."

"Farewell," cried Lamont. "You have
helped me to hide a helpless girl away from
a relative who meant her no good. Was
there anything wrong in that?"

"You scoundrel!" exclaimed Hetty, begin-
ning to sob. "I have helped to isolate an
unsuspecting girl in the midst of a crew of
unscrupulous villains! That is the true
manner of stating the case."

Lamont shrugged his shoulders.
"Go on," he said, confronting him.

"Do you really think so? Very good—I
shall not undertake to disturb your convic-
tion. But I came here to make a proposi-
tion. Listen while I put it into words."

"I do not wish to hear you," interrupted
Hetty, loudly and violently.

"But you must, my dear. So sit down
and listen quietly."

She looked round almost fiercely. Then
a long, sobbing breath escaped her. The
Frenchman was right. She must listen to
what he might say.

"Good. What I have to tell refers to
Claudia Chilton. She has taken a violent
fancy to you—which is not strange in the
least. She wishes you to become her con-
stant companion while she remains here."

He stopped short, apparently to watch the
effect of the words he had already spoken.
He saw Hetty change color and a strange fire
come into her bright blue eyes.

"Surely," she faltered, "you have not
come here to propose anything of that sort?"

"But I have, my dear. You must know
that your situation in this house is rather
peculiar," and he gave an embarrassed
cough. "Mr. Chilton thinks—and I per-
fectly agree with him—that there is nothing
left for us to do but to make use of you."

and friend, and do all in your power to help
along our cause with her."

"Never, never!"
Mr. Chilton uttered a fearful oath. He
advanced toward her with his hand clenched
and uplifted.

"You shall!" he hissed, savagely. "You
have no choice between that and—death!"
He had spoken the word at last, and then
he paused in sudden horror of it. Strong
tremors shook his frame. But the desperate
purpose expressed in voice and face and eye
never once faltered.

Lamont broke the silence that had fallen.
"Be reasonable," he whispered in Hetty's
ear. "If you don't accept the office some-
body else will. Claudia wants to see her
niece, Mr. Chilton means what he says. You had better
promise all he asks."

The poor girl wrung her hands in bitter
anguish. Was she never to be freed from
the spell of these miscreants? Were their
schemes to close more and more tightly about
her until she was as bad as the worst of them
all?

Her head fell upon her breast. Then a
sudden thought came to her like an inspira-
tion. She, at least, could protect Claudia to
the extent of her poor power; another might
play wholly into the hands of her enemies.
Was it not better, under the circumstances,
to yield to the superior power?

"Promise," urged Lamont, still in a
whisper.

"I do," she said, breaking into a hysterical
cry. "You give me no freedom of choice.
I will remain."

"It is well," and Mr. Chilton drew a
breath of relief. "Lamont, bring the Bible."
While Hetty stared in utter amazement, a
Bible was brought, and held before her.

"Now place your hand upon this book
and swear that you will never reveal to my
niece, Claudia, any discovery you may have
made, or anything you have done, since
coming to this house."

Hetty hesitated, and grew pale as death.
"Swear!" commanded that terrible voice.
There was no help for it. She dropped
her hand on the Bible, and said in a scared
whisper:

"I swear."
"Enough." The villain knew well the
power of such an oath with a girl of Hetty's
stamp. "Now take care that you are faithful
in word, thought and action. The slightest
show of treachery on your part will be
visited with summary punishment. I think
you understand this?"

"Yes."
"Good. You will be closely watched, and
every movement you make reported to me.
You cannot trifle with me with impunity.
It is very necessary you should realize that
fact. I hope you do."

Hetty bowed. She could no longer trust
herself to speak.

"It is well," went on that hard, pitiless
voice. "Now try to compose yourself. In
a very few moments you must go up-stairs
to Claudia's room. She expects you."

"She expects you," echoed the little
Frenchman, in a whisper. "Now listen to
poor old Lamont, my dear child, and be
reasonable."

CHAPTER XI.

FACE TO FACE.

Mr. Chilton went out. He found a ser-
vant in the hall, whom he sent to summon
Mrs. Chilton.

That lady soon made her appearance, the
picture of cold serenity, as usual. And, as
usual, her dry, white hands were meekly
folded.

Her husband whispered a few words in
her ear. She nodded, and the ghost of a
smile hovered about her thin lips. Apparently
in obedience to some command of his, she
turned and glided up-stairs to the door of
Claudia's bed-room.

"Come in," said a sweet voice, in answer
to her timid knock.

She entered. Claudia was sitting by the
window, but she rose instantly, with a
pleased smile of welcome.

"I am glad you have come."
At that point she stopped short. Turning,
she saw, for the first time, who the intruder
really was. The smile died from her lips,
and a slight tremor shook her frame.

Mrs. Chilton observed this sudden change,
and her pale face grew paler still. She did
not speak, but a wistful look came into her
strange eyes.

"I thought it was Hetty Deane," faltered
Claudia, feeling that she must say some-
thing.

"No, it is not Hetty Deane."
The voice was cold and even. Claudia
shivered again, but finally conquered the re-
pentance she felt for this woman, suffi-
ciently to hold out her hand to her.

"Sit down, Aunt Chilton. Of course I
am glad to see you. Only I was expecting
somebody else, you see—and—"

Mrs. Chilton slowly waved her hand.
"No matter," she said, quietly. "There
is nothing for which to apologise. No, I
will not sit down. I only came in to say
one word to you. And that word is in refer-
ence to—"

She paused.
"To whom?" questioned Claudia, eagerly.
"To whom?" questioned Claudia, eagerly.
"Yes, yes, I am coming to me di-
rectly? I don't know why I have taken so
sudden a fancy to her. I am actually trem-
bling with eagerness to see her once again."
Mrs. Chilton looked up sharply. A slight,
very slight shadow flitted over her pallid
face.

"Hetty is coming directly," she answered.
"But you have not heard what I wish to say
of her."
"No."
"It is not much." Mrs. Chilton's eyes
were now sweeping the floor. "Perhaps
you do not need to be told—perhaps you
have noticed it for yourself."
Claudia's impatience now mastered her.
She was led into a rudeness of which she was
not often guilty.
"Noticed what?" she echoed, crossly.

"That there is something peculiar about this mine," said Hatty. "I have noticed nothing of the sort. You puzzle me. I do not catch your meaning at all."

Mrs. Chilton sighed.

"You have not been with Hatty long enough to grasp all her peculiarities," she said, gently. "I am sure that very plainly, now. But I think they ought to be mentioned to you all the same."

"She seems a very pleasant, lovable girl," said Mrs. Chilton. "And she is, as Hatty says, a very pleasant, lovable girl. But there is something wrong with her."

"She tapped her brow significantly, and looked hard at her niece."

"Impossible!" cried Claudia, in horrified surprise, for she could not help taking in the full meaning of that gesture and the words to which it was an accompaniment.

"It is more than possible—it is true," was the quiet response. "But, looking at her, no one would imagine that her mind had lost its balance."

Claudia stood staring at her aunt in silent consternation. She knew not what to think or say.

"Hatty is not a maniac, of course," Mrs. Chilton resumed. "Perhaps she never will be one of those unfortunate. Her mind is simply unbalanced. It is a sort of hypochondria, perhaps. I don't pretend to understand her case. But the symptoms are peculiar, to say the least."

"Will you tell me some of them?"

"With pleasure. In the first place, she can put on the demeanor of a perfectly sane person. Her looks and words seem to be as usual as yours or mine. Not that this is peculiar. I believe it has been observed in many demented persons. But her mind seems to be filled with forebodings, and even with distrust of her best friends. She imagines that a thousand calamities threaten herself and those about her. Her suspicions are directed against my husband, sometimes against me, but often against other people. She looks wise, and throws out vague and mysterious hints. One would imagine some terrible conspiracy was going on, to hear her strange insinuations."

"She stopped to note the effect of the words she had spoken thus far. Claudia looked surprised and sorrowful, and full of sympathy, but not incredulous. Her trusting nature could scarcely conceive the treachery of which she was being made the victim."

"Mrs. Chilton's eyes lighted up with an unguessed satisfaction. "I need not add another word," she said, smiling. "I have said enough already to give you to understand what weight is to be attached to anything Hatty may insinuate. Forewarned is forearmed, my dear niece."

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

"Poor girl," said Claudia, softly. "I shall certainly be kind to her."

"And you will conceal from her your knowledge of her mania?"

"Yes, yes," said Hatty, never troubling you with any of her freaks, after all. If so, you will place trust in her, though she possessed no weakness of that sort."

SETH SKINNER'S LUCK.

HIS OWN STORY.

WRITTEN FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST, BY T. J. CHAMBERS.

I.

My parents died of a prevailing contagious fever while I was a mere infant, and like Pip, in Dickens's "Great Expectations," I was brought up by hand. My aunt, like Mrs. Joe Gargery, often got upon the "rampage," and as her husband was not present to shield me from her wrath, I was a good deal of a terror to her. Still I lived, and grew tough and callous in consequence of so much punishment.

One day when I was about ten years old, I found myself alone in the house. The door of the kitchen cupboard stood open before me, and the temptation to explore its shelves was too great to be resisted. I had a passionate fondness for preserves, and I knew that my aunt kept some of them on the top shelf. So I got a high chair, climbed upon it, and soon had a jar of the sweet delicacies in my hands. I laid hold of a fork, and commenced bolting the fruit at a fearful rate. While I had two or three pieces in my throat, I was startled by a sudden knock. I looked up, and my aunt stood before me, her mouth crammed as full as I could get it, my aunt suddenly entered the room. I was certain that she went out in the garden planting beans, when I commenced my raid on the preserves. With a look of terrible and righteous indignation, my aunt caught me by the back of the neck and dragged me out into the yard, where she broke off a long switch from a lilac bush, and commenced belaboring me most unmercifully. I yelled and kicked, and kicked and yelled, but my aunt scolded and whipped, and whipped and scolded. At length she was forced to desist from sheer exhaustion.

As soon as my aunt released me I slipped away, and ran with all my might into the orchard, where I fell down under a big, blossoming apple tree and wept bitterly.

While I was whimpering and sniffing in a forlorn and piteous manner, a little figure, clad in a red calico frock, approached me, and a little girl knelt down by my side, and placed her little hand on my forehead.

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"What ails you, Seth?" she said, in a voice as little and soft as her hand.

"I know the child tolerably well. It was little Ruth Farley, neighbor Farley's young one, who came to see me."

"Oh, Dave, you wicked, wicked boy, how can you do so?" said Ruth, almost crying.

"Why, say, I just take a stone and fling it at 'em," replied Dave, laughing. "I'm going to serve the rest of 'em in the same way."

"Oh, you mean!" The poor little innocent birdies, they don't do any harm."

Dave laughed the harder, and gathered up a handful of stones.

"Ruth, don't let him do it; it's a shame," said little Ruth, turning to me.

"You mean I must let him do it; let 'em be in the nest," I said.

"Indeed! I'll do just as I please about that," retorted Dave, throwing a stone at the nest.

"I ran up, and caught his hands. He broke loose from me, and struck me a blow in the chest. This irritated my combative nature, and I closed with him in a furious struggle. We tugged at each other desperately for some moments; at last I managed to throw him upon the ground."

"Now," I said, sitting astride of his breast, and grasping his long, lank hair, "you've got to promise never to rob or destroy a bird's nest again."

"Let me up," he said, squirming like a snake.

"You've got to promise," I answered, giving his hair a gentle pull.

"Oh! don't pull my hair out—I promise."

"Now you can get up," I said, scrambling to my feet. Dave got up likewise, looking very sheepish, and sneaked away without saying a word.

"What does the Sunday-school teacher say about fighting?" said little Ruth, who seemed a good deal shocked and frightened.

"I don't know what she says, but I don't think it was wrong in this case."

"You think I done right in whippin' Dave, do you?"

"Yes, I do, 'cause you only done it to keep him from killin' the little birdies."

"Well, I'm glad you think so. Aunt Lib will give it to me as well as I go home."

"Will she whip you, do you suppose?"

"I reckon she will, she'll tan me well, when Dave tells her about it, and he'll be sure to tell a lot of lies. But I don't care, so long as you like me, and think I done right."

"I do like you, Seth, oh, ever so much!" I said, where I was sitting.

"Of course I wanted to. The little girl's cheeks were red as roses."

"I must go home now, Seth," said Ruth.

"Good-bye. Remember your promise about stealin'!"

"I will. Let me kiss you again, Ruth. There—good-bye."

"I was not mistaken concerning the reception awaiting me at home. My aunt met me with a stick, and beat me till she was tired. She then informed me that I would have to live in the garden for the rest of the day, and go without my dinner. The punishment was severe; but I thought of little Ruth Farley's kiss, and felt glad that I had whipped my big, overbearing cousin."

II.

Eleven years passed away, bringing many changes, as the years always do.

I, Seth Skinner, was a little boy no longer, but a tall, stalwart young man of twenty, with a deep voice and an impatient mustache. I still lived with my aunt, because I had no other place to go to, being without friends or money, and my aunt was not unkind as far as that went.

I had the chief management of the large farm, as my cousin Dave was too lazy to work. He spent the greater part of his time at the nearest village, lounging about the stores and taverns. When he was at home he was indolent and idle, although he thought himself perfect, and gave him nearly all the ready money which the farm brought in. I received scarcely any pay for my work, except a very moderate amount of clothes; but my aunt continually reminded me that I ought to be grateful to her, because, like Mrs. Gargery, she had "brought me up by hand."

Little Ruth Farley was little Ruth no longer, but a well-grown, beautiful young lady of nineteen. Her parents died when she was a child, and she was brought up by her aunt, who was a very strict and pious woman. She had never been to Sunday school, and was poorly instructed in theology, although I was two years older than my companion.

"How does the Sunday-school teacher know?" I inquired.

"The Bible says so," replied little Ruth, solemnly.

I scarcely knew what the Bible was, but I concluded that it was useless to argue further, for the little girl seemed to know all such matters.

"Well, I suppose it was wicked for me to steal the preserves, and I'm sorry, cause they were made me feel dreadful bad, and I don't want to go to Sunday school no more."

"Oh, Seth, how could you be so wicked?" she said, drawing away from me.

"I don't know as I was wicked," I said, attempting to argue the point. "I had a right to the preserves, I reckon, but I wish I hadn't eat quite so many of 'em, and here I carried my hands involuntarily to my stomach."

"Oh, Seth, it was awful wicked," the Sunday-school teacher says we must steal, and I don't want to go to Sunday school no more, and we can't never go to Heaven."

I had never been to Sunday school, and was poorly instructed in theology, although I was two years older than my companion.

"How does the Sunday-school teacher know?" I inquired.

"The Bible says so," replied little Ruth, solemnly.

I scarcely knew what the Bible was, but I concluded that it was useless to argue further, for the little girl seemed to know all such matters.

"Well, I suppose it was wicked for me to steal the preserves, and I'm sorry, cause they were made me feel dreadful bad, and I don't want to go to Sunday school no more."

"Oh, Seth, how could you be so wicked?" she said, drawing away from me.

"I don't know as I was wicked," I said, attempting to argue the point. "I had a right to the preserves, I reckon, but I wish I hadn't eat quite so many of 'em, and here I carried my hands involuntarily to my stomach."

"Oh, Seth, it was awful wicked," the Sunday-school teacher says we must steal, and I don't want to go to Sunday school no more, and we can't never go to Heaven."

I had never been to Sunday school, and was poorly instructed in theology, although I was two years older than my companion.

"How does the Sunday-school teacher know?" I inquired.

"The Bible says so," replied little Ruth, solemnly.

I scarcely knew what the Bible was, but I concluded that it was useless to argue further, for the little girl seemed to know all such matters.

"Well, I suppose it was wicked for me to steal the preserves, and I'm sorry, cause they were made me feel dreadful bad, and I don't want to go to Sunday school no more."

"Oh, Seth, how could you be so wicked?" she said, drawing away from me.

"I don't know as I was wicked," I said, attempting to argue the point. "I had a right to the preserves, I reckon, but I wish I hadn't eat quite so many of 'em, and here I carried my hands involuntarily to my stomach."

"Oh, Seth, it was awful wicked," the Sunday-school teacher says we must steal, and I don't want to go to Sunday school no more, and we can't never go to Heaven."

I had never been to Sunday school, and was poorly instructed in theology, although I was two years older than my companion.

"How does the Sunday-school teacher know?" I inquired.

"The Bible says so," replied little Ruth, solemnly.

I scarcely knew what the Bible was, but I concluded that it was useless to argue further, for the little girl seemed to know all such matters.

"Well, I suppose it was wicked for me to steal the preserves, and I'm sorry, cause they were made me feel dreadful bad, and I don't want to go to Sunday school no more."

"Oh, Seth, how could you be so wicked?" she said, drawing away from me.

"I don't know as I was wicked," I said, attempting to argue the point. "I had a right to the preserves, I reckon, but I wish I hadn't eat quite so many of 'em, and here I carried my hands involuntarily to my stomach."

"Oh, Seth, it was awful wicked," the Sunday-school teacher says we must steal, and I don't want to go to Sunday school no more, and we can't never go to Heaven."

I had never been to Sunday school, and was poorly instructed in theology, although I was two years older than my companion.

"How does the Sunday-school teacher know?" I inquired.

"The Bible says so," replied little Ruth, solemnly.

I scarcely knew what the Bible was, but I concluded that it was useless to argue further, for the little girl seemed to know all such matters.

"Well, I suppose it was wicked for me to steal the preserves, and I'm sorry, cause they were made me feel dreadful bad, and I don't want to go to Sunday school no more."

"Oh, Seth, how could you be so wicked?" she said, drawing away from me.

"I don't know as I was wicked," I said, attempting to argue the point. "I had a right to the preserves, I reckon, but I wish I hadn't eat quite so many of 'em, and here I carried my hands involuntarily to my stomach."

after talking the matter over for awhile, we agreed to start together for the gold-diggings the very next day.

Laurens—that was his name—was an impetuous young fellow, fond of adventure and excitement; he easily persuaded me that we could make our fortunes at the mines in a few months. Poor fellow! Little enough he made them—but I will not anticipate.

I went back to my aunt's house and made what little preparation was necessary for the journey. I packed up my tools in the garden, to bid her good-bye. Ruth looked prettier than ever, with her cheeks flushed with exercise, and the brown curls falling over her white forehead.

"Ruth, I am going away," I said, catching her hands and looking down into her sweet dark eyes.

"Going away—where?" she asked, her face pale as a lily.

"To California. My aunt has told me to leave her house, and I am going to dig gold and make my fortune. Then I'll come back and marry my pretty sweetheart—for you'll be true to me, won't you, Ruth?"

"I'll be true to you always, Seth—you know I will."

"And you won't marry my Cousin Dave, if he wants you to ever so much?"

"I'll never marry anybody but you, Seth, for I could never love another."

We parted. Ruth ran back to the house, and I came back to my aunt's. I was at the most, and we will be happy together as the day is long."

We walked together through the garden, and I said her of all my plans and hopes. I was hard for us to part. Under the grapevine arbor I took her in my arms and kissed her again and again.

"Good-bye, Ruth, my darling, my sweet," I murmured. "I did not know how I loved you, while you were here. If you are false to me, I shall die, I think."

"You need not be afraid. I love you as you love me, and I will never forget you."

"God bless you, Ruth. Write to me often, as I shall to you."

We parted. Ruth ran back to the house, and I came back to my aunt's. I was at the most, and we will be happy together as the day is long."

We walked together through the garden, and I said her of all my plans and hopes. I was hard for us to part. Under the grapevine arbor I took her in my arms and kissed her again and again.

"Good-bye, Ruth, my darling, my sweet," I murmured. "I did not know how I loved you, while you were here. If you are false to me, I shall die, I think."

"You need not be afraid. I love you as you love me, and I will never forget you."

"God bless you, Ruth. Write to me often, as I shall to you."

We parted. Ruth ran back to the house, and I came back to my aunt's. I was at the most, and we will be happy together as the day is long."

We walked together through the garden, and I said her of all my plans and hopes. I was hard for us to part. Under the grapevine arbor I took her in my arms and kissed her again and again.

"Good-bye, Ruth, my darling, my sweet," I murmured. "I did not know how I loved you, while you were here. If you are false to me, I shall die, I think."

"You need not be afraid. I love you as you love me, and I will never forget you."

"God bless you, Ruth. Write to me often, as I shall to you."

We parted. Ruth ran back to the house, and I came back to my aunt's. I was at the most, and we will be happy together as the day is long."

We walked together through the garden, and I said her of all my plans and hopes. I was hard for us to part. Under the grapevine arbor I took her in my arms and kissed her again and again.

"Good-bye, Ruth, my darling, my sweet," I murmured. "I did not know how I loved you, while you were here. If you are false to me, I shall die, I think."

"You need not be afraid. I love you as you love me, and I will never forget you."

"God bless you, Ruth. Write to me often, as I shall to you."

We parted. Ruth ran back to the house, and I came back to my aunt's. I was at the most, and we will be happy together as the day is long."

We walked together through the garden, and I said her of all my plans and hopes. I was hard for us to part. Under the grapevine arbor I took her in my arms and kissed her again and again.

"Good-bye, Ruth, my darling, my sweet," I murmured. "I did not know how I loved you, while you were here. If you are false to me, I shall die, I think."

"You need not be afraid. I love you as you love me, and I will never forget you."

"God bless you, Ruth. Write to me often, as I shall to you."

We parted. Ruth ran back to the house, and I came back to my aunt's. I was at the most, and we will be happy together as the day is long."

We walked together through the garden, and I said her of all my plans and hopes. I was hard for us to part. Under the grapevine arbor I took her in my arms and kissed her again and again.

"Good-bye, Ruth, my darling, my sweet," I murmured. "I did not know how I loved you, while you were here. If you are false to me, I shall die, I think."

"You need not be afraid. I love you as you love me, and I will never forget you."

"God bless you, Ruth. Write to me often, as I shall to you."

We parted. Ruth ran back to the house, and I came back to my aunt's. I was at the most, and we will be happy together as the day is long."


We walked together through the garden, and I said her of all my plans and hopes. I was hard for us to part. Under the grapevine arbor I took her in my arms and kissed her again and again.

"Good-bye, Ruth, my darling, my sweet," I murmured. "

lately through the crowd, and pushing past with
 Fred Lington, presented himself at her

[illegible]

This is a scan of a blank page from a document. The paper has a light beige or off-white color with some minor texture visible. There are no markings, text, or illustrations on the page.



me one day in a great fever, he had seen Captain Dartian kiss Eleanor as she sat at the piano.

"The girl is crazy," he said, his brown English face wrinkled with indignation. "I hate to get her into a man with father, but I can't stand everything, and I have endured Captain Dartian's visits as long as I can, and then he calmed down and told me all he knew of the Captain's past life. Not much, it is true, but enough to show that, as he said, it was 'no good' to Nell to know him, much less to make him her hero, as she was evidently doing."

"I wish you would speak to her, Bertie," he said, as he rose to go. "Perhaps it will make her more careful. I can't bear to know that he has it in his power to go back to London, and tell all the fellows at his club about kissing my sister—and I am sure he will do it. You'll speak to her?"

"Yes," I answered. "I will do what I can."

The next day Captain Dartian called again; I had just driven out to make some calls when he arrived, but returned shortly after, and as he was removing his wraps, Nell came into the room. I saw at once that something was the matter, for she was very pale and her eyes were swollen and red, therefore I dismissed Nell as quickly as possible, and going to her put my arms around her, and said, as I had been used to do when she was a wee girl, "Tall sister all about it, dearie."

Well as I knew Nell's passionate nature, I was shocked and surprised at the storm of sobs and tears which answered me.

"Oh, Bertie, Bertie," she cried, "go down and say a word for Laurie and me. They are both against him; they are sending him away, and I love him dearly, dearly, Bertie."

"For Laurie and me," had it come to this? "For Laurie and me?"

I tried to reason with her. I told her, gently as I could, that Tom had told me, but she only shook her beautiful head. "It makes no difference," she said. "I heard all that years ago, when I first knew him. Poor Laurie! Everybody is against him but me—even you, Bertie, and I thought you loved me."

It was very hard to hear her reproaches, but I could do nothing and say nothing to help or comfort her, and I was immensely relieved when a message came from father requesting me to come down into the library.

Of the three occupants of the room, Captain Dartian was apparently the coolest and most unemotional. Father looked disturbed and ill at ease, Tom was hot and angry, but Captain Dartian smiled and bowed as we entered, and placed chairs for us in his study.

He sat in his study, and all appearances, as unemotional and as much at ease as ever.

It was a very painful interview; father said a great many hard and unjust things, and although Nell bore it quietly as long as he spoke of her, she broke down when he began to speak of Captain Dartian her temper flared out.

"You may talk to me as much as you like," she said. "I don't care, but I won't sit quietly and hear you speak of him. I don't blame you for asking me to be his wife, and I will go where you think best."

Tom received a scorching glance from her flashing eyes, which Tom has seen fit to tell against him, if he were wealthy or titled you would overlook his outburst; besides, with a little faltering in her eloquence, "that is past and gone, he told me better now."

There was a glow of admiration on the captain's face as he looked at her, standing so proudly erect and speaking so bravely in his defense. He said that her fiery words were no good.

"It is no use, Nell," he said, laying aside his indifferent manner, and rising with a moody shadow on his face, "they won't give a fellow a chance to reform, even when he wants to. I will go now, I think."

"Get—go where?" The color faded from her face, and she caught his arm with both hands.

"To the devil. No, not that exactly," with a better laugh. "No matter where, Nell, only good-bye."

"Oh, Laurie!" still she clung to him pale and shivering. "don't leave me so."

He turned toward us with a sudden manliness on his face. "You are all very hard on me," he said, "you won't give me a fair chance at all, but I swear to you that I would make Nell happy if you would give her to me. I have been bad and wicked, but I love Nell, and will do better for her sake. There was something in the simple, earnest words which went to my heart, and I rose and held my hand out to him.

"I am sorry this has happened," I said. "If you are going to get me with you good fortune, Captain Dartian."

"Thank you."

As he clasped my hand, it came to me dimly that perhaps we had been very unjust to him and Nell, what right had we to make them both so unhappy?

"Good-bye, Nell," he said again, and then, bending low, he kissed her gently. "God bless you always, my darling." And he was gone.

After that day a great change came over Nell, she grew quiet and reserved, and all the old bright ways were laid aside. Toward father her manner was entirely altered; she was coldly respectful to him, no more and no less. She obeyed him implicitly in the slightest things without a word of dissent, or a sign of unobedience. But I think, as the days went by, he would have welcomed a glimpse of the old-time temper—a return of the careless, warm ways—a flash of the girlish defiance—or some little act of rebellion, which would have shown that the naughty Nell of old, but it never came.

Of Captain Dartian she never spoke—but, often, as she sat sewing or reading, her hands would drop into her lap, and she would sit thinking intently, with the worst, weary look which had come to her of late shading her face, until my heart ached for her, for I knew, only too well, where her thoughts were.

I longed to comfort her in her trouble, and once or twice I tried to do so, but she would make me realize that I felt for her, and pitied her with all my heart—but she turned away from me coldly. "You are very kind," she would say, "but you don't know anything about it; you only trouble me, and I can tell it for myself alone. Leave me to myself, please, Bertie."

And she would unclasp my arms with a gentle firmness not to be resisted, and put me away from her.

So the days passed on, until spring came, and on one of the first warm days, as I was passing through the hall, I met Eleanor coming in from one of her solitary rambles; her long trailing skirts were muddied and torn, her hat was swinging by the strings from her arm, and her bright hair was tangled and blown about by the wind—but her face was flushed, her eyes were bright, her whole appearance was changed. It was the beautiful, naughty Nell of old, who passed me with a nod and smile, and went up the long stairway, her wet skirts clinging around her feet, her shawl dragging behind her, singing softly to herself as she had been used to do.

When I went upstairs and sat by the window, I saw that Eleanor had been sleeping on her lap, and a new look of happiness and peace on her beautiful face—but she said nothing, and I dreading to bring the shadow back, asked no questions.

The night as she lay asleep in her room, I went to see some trifling errand, and stood for a few minutes looking down at her.

Beautiful she was with the warm glow of sleep on her face, her bright hair brushed back from her white forehead, her lips slightly parted with a happy smile; but even as I looked at her she moved restlessly, and as I bent to kiss her, a name, long unheard, came to my ears, "Laurie."

That was the last time that I ever saw her, as she was then; the last time for many years that my lips touched hers; the last time, although I did not know it then.

The next night she was gone, leaving no trace behind her by which we could follow her, no word of farewell, and taking with her only a curl of baby Maudie's soft hair.

"She has made her bed," said father, "let her lie in it," and thereforward Eleanor's name was never heard in the house which had been her home all her lifetime.

I sorrowed long and deeply for my beautiful sister, at first I hoped that she would send me some word or message, but the days became weeks, the weeks months, and at last the months became years, and no word came.

Charles and I stayed at Nethall until the next Autumn, and then went back to London, but I did not feel like entering society just then, and so after awhile my home in London was closed again, and we went on the continent, for I was weak and ill, and change of air and scene was recommended to me.

My little boy was born in a pleasant little village of Brittany, close on the coast, and during all the long summer after he came to us we remained there, enjoying the plain, simple life to the utmost. For the next two or three years we wandered hither and thither—now in Italy, now in France, and it was not until five years after Eleanor's flight that we returned to England again.

I was well and strong then, and as Charles was fond of company, we were soon plunged into the midst of fashionable dissipation, and by degree the constant worrying and anxiety concerning my sister grew less, and by and by one day Charles and I were out driving it all came back to me with cruel force, for as we rolled along I saw among the hurrying crowd of pedestrians a tall, slight figure, which made my heart throb strangely. I caught Charles's arm, and held him to my feet.

"Oh, Charles, Charles!" I cried, "stop the carriage—speak to her! Don't you see her?"

Where?—who? I think a suspicion entered his head that I had suddenly become insane, but as I pointed out the straight, lithe figure, he answered the question in my eyes. "It's Nell," he said briefly. "Wait a moment," and he sprang to the ground and followed her, while I sat back on the cushions and tried to breathe patiently.

Yes, it was Nell, for although her face was hidden by a thick veil, there was no mistaking the tall, slender figure, the wonderful coil of golden hair, and the graceful walk which had been characteristic of her in her girlish days. Nell certainly, although the proud head was bowed a little, and her movements were slower and more sedate than in the old times, and waiting there, my heart went out to her as it had never done before, doubly as I had loved her, for the heavy black garments which she wore told me that a great grief had come to her. Poor, naughty Nell!

In an almost incredibly short space of time Charles was back again, breathless but eager and excited.

"Bertie," he said, "I was right. She lives near here. Will you go to her now?" And then, seeing my answer in my face, he gave a direction to the coachman, and turning into a side street, we stopped before a plain, dreary-looking house, which displayed in one of the front windows a placard announcing "Rooms to rent."

A sour-faced woman opened the door and greeted us with a threatening nod.

"Yes, Mrs. Dartian," for Charles had inquired for her by that name. "Mrs. Dartian did live there—second floor back, but she didn't see anybody."

"Tain't no use to ask you up," as Charles insisted on entering, and then becoming suddenly civil as he put a gold piece into her hand. "I hope you are friends of hers, for she's a sweet-spoken young thing, and in a deal of trouble."

I shall never forget the moment that we stood, half tremble, before the door of the "second floor back." I shall not forget how my heart bounded as her voice answered Charles's knock with a "come in."

Charles opened the door softly, and for an instant I stood looking in. She was sitting by the window in the old attitude, her hands lying on her lap, her head turned away from us, her bonnet and mantle were thrown on a chair in the old careless fashion, and her comb having fallen from her hair, the bright ribbons and waves fell over her shoulders and half veiled her face.

One moment I stood there, and as she turned her head languidly, her great black eyes met mine, and with one glad cry she rushed to me and clasped her arms around me.

"Oh, Nell! naughty Nell—found at last!" After the first confusion was over, and Charles had discreetly left us together, my heart sank as I saw how worn and thin her beautiful face was, and heard the sharp, hacking cough which seemed to trouble her so.

"Have you been ill?" I asked, anxiously.

"No, no, no, nothing of the kind," she replied, as she turned her head and looked at me. "I have not been well since—my voice faltered, and she pressed her hand to her side, "not since Laurie died—last year," and then she bowed her head, tired head on my shoulder and sobbed like a child.

"We were very happy, Bertie," she said when she grew calmer. "Laurie was so good, and we loved each other so. Oh, Bertie! you don't know how hard it was when he died, and then, as we sat together, I heard the pastor of the church, a young man, a weak hand lifted the latch, and a childish voice cried—"

"Mamma—mamma—are you there?" Eleanor's face flushed slightly. "It is little Nell," she said, and then the door opened and a wee, effish child came in, running to her, clambered into her lap, while Eleanor looked at me with a little of the old girlish brightness in her face.

Nell's child—how strange it seemed—Nell's child, and yet so exactly like Nell her self, that it seemed as though I were again in short clothes, full of worries and anxiety about the naughty little spirit, as I had been in old times.

"Four mamma," said she, putting Eleanor's tear-stained face, and scowling at me under her black bonnet. "Don't cry—she's a naughty woman—don't cry!" and then Eleanor, holding her close, told her who I was.

"Ant Bertie," said the little one, doubtfully, still eyeing me askance. "Do you love her, mamma?"

"Yes, my darling—darling."

"Did papa love her?"

"Yes, she was kind to him when he was very unhappy."

The child's loyal heart was satisfied and her face brightened; she slipped down from Eleanor's lap, and came to me. "Kiss me, Ant Bertie," she said, "I love you, too."

And as Nell came back to me, not for long, she was so quiet and uncomplaining that I hoped against hope all the long winter, but before the earliest spring flowers began to bloom she left me—this time forever.

"Take care of Nell, for my sake, Bertie," she said, and then with the name of the man whom she had loved so dearly on her lips—"Laurie, dear Laurie!"—she was gone.

Years have passed since then; I live as silver threads in my hair, but I live my youth over again with my children. And, among the merry group of boys and girls, there is not one whom I love better than her.

whose tall, lithe figure, flowing yellow hair, and great black eyes seemed so like the sister I had lost. She is naughty and effish, careless and thoughtless, but I love her more dearly than I can tell, and although father is very kind to my children, and puts them in his grave way, it is Nell who is the nearest to his heart.

He never rebukes her, he never notices her wild ways, but his eyes follow her lovingly wherever she goes; and often, as she sits at his feet in the twilight, leaning her head on his knee, and his arm around her, he looks down at her with a half-remembered tenderness on his stern face, and knows that he is thinking, not of her, but of the fair young girl whose presence once brightened the old house as hers does now—thinking of the old times and of beautiful, naughty Nell.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.


When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

When Margaret Denbigh came into the world she found herself in a home of comparative wealth, in the best society of Lancashire; her father was one of the most flourishing lawyers in the place, a jovial sort of fellow who loved hospitality and good cheer. The death of her mother, when she was fifteen, besides leaving her thus early mistress of her father's house, distracted her attention from the ordinary pursuits of a girl, and she was left, as it were, to her own devices, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her, and what good she could do with the grace and composure of well-seasoned dowagers, yet most of the things which girls learn as naturally as A, B, C, the social graces and mathematical were dead letters to her.

BY WARE.





BY MARK TWAIN

1940